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RELEASED: May 10, 2019

Kentucky Wheat Production Looks Promising

Louisville, Ky. – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the Crop Production report today, forecasting a much larger wheat crop than last year.

Kentucky farmers expect to harvest 25.5 million bushels of **winter wheat** during 2019. The expected crop for 2019 would be up 29 percent from the previous year. Based on crop conditions as of May 1 and assuming a normal growing season, farmers expect a yield of 75.0 bushel per acre, up 9.0 bushels from 2018. Farmers seeded 450,000 acres last fall with 340,000 acres to be harvested for grain. Acres for other uses totaled 110,000 acres and will be used as cover crop for tobacco or cut as silage or hay.

“This forecast gives us an early look at the crop potential, but conditions since May 1 and until the crop is in the bin, will determine how well it yields,” said David Knopf, director of the NASS Eastern Mountain Regional Office in Kentucky. “A 75 bushel per acre yield is above the five-year average of 73.4 bushels per acre. With the later than normal planting season last fall, and the uncertainty coming into spring, I think most producers will be happy if it yields average or better.”

As of May 4, winter wheat was rated 1 percent very poor, 4 percent poor, 21 percent fair, 58 percent good and 16 percent excellent. At this same date, crop progress was at 65 percent headed compared to 33 percent last year and slightly ahead of the five year average.

Winter wheat production for the **Nation** was forecast at 1.27 billion bushels, up 7 percent from 2018. The expected area to be harvested for grain or seed totals 25.2 million acres, up 2 percent from last year. As of May 1, the U.S. yield was forecast at 50.3 bushels per acre, up 2.4 bushels from last year.

As of May 1, **Kentucky** on-farm **hay stocks** totaled 500,000 tons, down 150,000 tons from May 1, 2018 stocks. Farmers have used 86 percent of their hay stocks since December 1, 2018.

U. S. hay stocks were at 14.9 million tons, down 442,000 tons from 2018.